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IDENTICAL LETTERS DATED 14 JUNE 1997 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL AND TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a letter dated 12 June 1997 addressed to you by Mr. Mohammed Said Al-Sahaf, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iraq, giving details of the aerial violations that have accompanied the continuing incursion into Iraq's territory by the Turkish armed forces and urging the United Nations to meet its responsibilities as laid down in the Charter and to halt the intimidation and aggression to which Iraq is constantly being subjected.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nizar HAMDOON
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex

Identical letters dated 12 June 1997 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq addressed to the Secretary-General and to the President of the Security Council

Ever since 21 May 1997, Turkish armed forces have been continuing their wide-ranging military incursion into the territory and airspace of the Republic of Iraq. I have diligently kept you and the members of the United Nations Security Council informed of the details of this wanton aggression, and it was condemned by the League of Arab States and the Arab Group in their statements of 25 and 30 May 1997 respectively. It was also condemned by the Coordinating Bureau of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries on 30 May 1997, and many countries have issued statements condemning and strongly censuring the aggression and urging Turkey to withdraw immediately and to desist from violating Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Nevertheless, these international statements reflecting the Turkish act of aggression have not deterred the Turkish Government and have not brought it to comply with the demands of the international community.

The Security Council, as an international organ responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, bears special responsibility with respect to any aggression against or violation of sovereignty committed against any of the world's countries. The Council also bears special responsibility with respect to the sovereignty of Iraq, in accordance with its own resolutions. We nevertheless note with great surprise that the Council remains silent and is unable to take any action to deter the Turkish Government from continuing its aggression and its unlawful violations of Iraq's territory and airspace. This attitude of indifference confirms the double standard on the basis of which the Security Council deals with issues involving different countries and the evident inconsistency with regard to issues that concern Iraq in particular. I refer in this connection to the letter dated 25 May 1997 from Mr. Tariq Aziz, Deputy Prime Minister of Iraq, addressed to the President of the Security Council for May 1997 (S/1997/391, annex), in which he sets forth our viewpoint on this question in detail.

The failure of the Security Council to take the deterrent action required in accordance with its responsibilities and powers has caused the Turkish Government to persist in maintaining its incursion into Iraq and to continue its violations of Iraq's airspace. The latter have been as follows:

1. Between 1135 and 1225 hours on 31 May 1997 Turkish fighter aircraft violated the airspace of the Republic of Iraq with four sorties. The aerial violations were centred on the Amadiyah, Fibu and Batufah areas.

2. Between 1050 and 1155 hours on 1 June 1997 Turkish fighter aircraft violated the airspace of the Republic of Iraq with two sorties. The aerial violations were centred on the Zakho, Amadiyah, Fibu and Aqrah areas.

3. Between 0756 and 1215 hours on 2 June 1997 Turkish fighter aircraft violated the airspace of the Republic of Iraq with four sorties in the Pibu and Pibu East areas.

4. Between 0800 and 1757 hours on 3 June 1997 Turkish fighter aircraft violated the airspace of the Republic of Iraq with 14 sorties in the Pibu, Zakho and Amadiyah areas.

As stated in my letter of 3 June 1997, the Turkish Government bears full international responsibility for the acts of aggression it commits inside Iraqi territory and for all their consequences, regardless of the alleged reasons it gives.

The Government of Iraq reserves its legitimate right under international law to determine an appropriate response to this brutal military aggression and to seek compensation for the damage caused by these Turkish breaches and violations of Iraq's territory and airspace and for the human suffering inflicted on Iraqi citizens by these acts of aggression. Through you, it renews its call to the Government of Turkey to reconsider its policy with respect to the situation in northern Iraq, to promote the collaboration of the two countries on the basis of considerations of good-neighbourliness and mutual respect for sovereignty and to eliminate the reasons for the persistence of a situation that jeopardizes the interests of both countries.

As, through you, I reiterate my country's call to its Turkish neighbour to respect Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity, I express the hope that the United Nations will meet its responsibilities as laid down in the Charter and that it will halt the intimidation and aggression to which the Republic of Iraq is constantly being subjected.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mohammed Said AL-SAHAF
Minister for Foreign Affairs
of the Republic of Iraq